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DOCUMENT: SAN JACINTO AND TEMESCAL

(From unpublished MSS. by Benjamin Hayes [Em. Notes, 448-452] in Bancroft Collection.)

The region in the annexed diagram (*) which, for convenience, is marked San Jacinto Plain, is one of the most desirable portions of San Diego County for stock and general agriculture, and is especially adapted for sheep raising. It is so connected, in the legal title, with the adjoining low mountain tract of Temescal (as well as from other circumstances), that both may be considered together. Temescal, however, belongs to San Bernardino County.

Before 1866 Mr. Abel Stearns had bought some interest in Temescal from the widow and heirs of Don Leandro Serrano, deceased. About the end of June of that year he employed me to file exceptions for him in the office of the U. S. Surveyor-General, at San Francisco, to a survey which had been made of the "Sobrante" (balance) of San Jacinto, making it fall upon and include the whole of the tin mines of Temescal, and in all eleven square leagues of land. I was at the same time attorney for the widow, Doña Josefa Montalba de Serrano, who was also prosecuting the claim held by her deceased husband to five league of Temescal, before the Supreme Court of the United States.

Starting from San Diego July, 1866, with Don José Antonio Estudillo, and failing at Temecula to find the surveyor promised by Mr. Stearns, we crossed the San Jacinto Plain to San Bernardino, obtained the services of Henry Wilkes, Esq., Co. Surveyor. Mr. G. E. Hubbell joined us there. He had lived about three years at those mines, in charge of them. A pleasant short day's drive up the San Timoteo Pass (which conducts to San Gorgonio) and over the hills from Weaver's, brought us at night to the residence of Don Salvador Estudillo, one of the owners of San Jacinto Viego (Old San Jacinto). Next morning we called at Guachapa, two miles further, to see the venerable Doña Victoria Dominguez de Estudillo, and went on across San Jacinto Nueva (New San Jacinto) to La Laguna, and the next day on to Temescal. Our observations were completed on July 21st and we returned the next day to Los Angeles City.

In summer, I confess, this plain is not inviting on account of its heat and the scarcity of water. It is known that water can be got almost everywhere on New San Jacinto by digging wells to the depth of a few feet, and the face of the country promises artesian water through this whole basin. About two miles from the residence

of Doña Victoria is a hot spring and another near the residence of Don Salvador. On old San Jacinto is a place called "Casa de la Loma," a low hill with an old house upon it that belonged to the Mission of San Luis Rey. It is surrounded by little springs. This is about four miles from Doña Victoria's. In this neighborhood, or about the center of the two ranches, is best for stock, whether for grass or for water. The San Jacinto River rises in the mountain of San Jacinto and Coahuilla Mountain (or Taquia, as the Indians call it), and runs perennially as far as the Indian village of Sobora, in summer. There is little timber on New San Jacinto, a good deal in the vicinity and direction of Doña Victoria's and Saboba.

These two San Jacinto ranches, comprehending nineteen square leagues, are almost a perfect plain, broken a little by isolated hills. It extends southwardly to Temecula and northward to near San Bernardino; is bounded on the west by Temescal Mountain and hilly ranges of the Santa Ana River. The entire plain contains perhaps 150,000 acres of land.

San Jacinto Viejo was granted Dec. 21st, 1842, by Manuel Jimento to Don José Antonio Estudillo: San Jacinto Nuevo y Potrero Jan. 14th, 1846, by Pio Pico to Miguel de Pedrodena (11 leagues), and the Sobrante of San Jacinto Viejo and Nueva, or surplus over the two first named ranchos (five leagues) May 9th, 1846, by Pio Pico to Maria del Rosaria Estudillo de Aguirre. Their relative positions at the date of the last grant appears by the annexed diagram (A), of the whole tract, made by actual survey by Jasper O'Farrell, in 1845, and which was submitted to the Mexican government by each petitioner. The tract designated by this diagram on the earth's surface runs N. W. and S. E. across the San Jacinto Plain, between it and the Temescal tract, extending in length toward San Bernardino.

Buying the Sobrante and locating the other two ranches to suit their purpose—and without the knowledge of the heirs of Estudillo and Pedrodena, certain parties located the Sobrante, stretching it to eleven leagues at the same time, so as to take in the mines of Temescal—which had then come to be considered a store of incalculable wealth. This led to the proceedings first referred to of Mr. Stearns. The case was finally lost by him both in the Land Department, and in the case of Temescal, in the Supreme Court of the U. S.

Leandro Serrano's father was one of the soldiers who came with Father Junipero Serra to establish San Diego. Don Leandro was long mayor-domo of Pala for the Mission of San Luis Rey. As early as 1818 he commenced the settlement of Temescal, had a corral and some few cows, oxen, and horses, and had begun a

garden. In 1826 he had a good adobe house, a garden with fruit trees, considerable cattle and horse stock. His family lived there then. His wife, Doña Presentacion de Yorba, dying, he married Doña Josefa de Montalba, and continued to reside there until his death, in 1852. He left numerous children.* To this day to many of the native Californians it is inconceivable how it is that this ancient possession, with boundaries well defined to the extent of five leagues, and always respected in their other grants by the Mexican authorities, could avail nothing under our system.

The land went into the hands of a company of speculators with a capital of \$3,000,000, except a few little garden spots which this family and some settlers have retained, it is to be supposed, only by a degree of corporate magnanimity in executing this remarkable survey.—(Diagram.)

** Don José Antonio Serrano is his [Leandro Serrano's] son by his first wife and was born at the Presidio of San Diego, but was reared principally at Pala and Temescal. He is now sixty years of age, April, 1875.*